No more colour! Authoritarian regimes and colour revolutions in Eurasia

Evgeny Finkel [a] [b] & Yitzhak M. Brudny [c]

[a] Department of Political Science, University of
Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, USA

[b] Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence, Yale
University, New Haven, USA

[c] Department of Political Science & Department of
History, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

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No more colour! Authoritarian regimes and colour revolutions in Eurasia

Evgeny Finkel[a,b]* and Yitzhak M. Brudny[c]

[a]*Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, USA;*
[b]*Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence, Yale University, New Haven, USA;*
[c]*Department of Political Science & Department of History, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel*

Between 2000 and 2005, colour revolutions swept away authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes in Serbia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. Yet, after these initial successes, attempts to replicate strategies failed to produce regime change elsewhere in the region. This introductory article argues that students of democratization and democracy promotion should study not only the successful colour revolutions, but also the colour revolution prevention strategies adopted by authoritarian elites. The article proposes a new typology of authoritarian reactions to the challenge of democratization and presents the main findings of the special issue, devoted to the analysis of authoritarian reactions to colour revolution in the post-communist region and in Iran.

Keywords: colour revolutions; democratization; authoritarianism; regime survival

From 2000 to 2005, a series of popular protests, which later became known as 'colour revolutions', swept away authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes in Serbia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. The common trigger of these revolutions was an attempt by the authoritarian leaders to falsify election results in their favour. These revolutions established a repertoire of non-violent, sometimes successful, regime change strategies. In other Eurasian states, however, attempts to replicate key strategies, so successful in the earlier colour revolutions, such as peaceful protests, public demands for democratization, the use of election monitoring and post-election mass protests to contest fraudulent elections, failed. Moreover, in Eurasian countries where no serious attempt to launch a colour revolution was made, governments nonetheless chose to avoid the possibility of regime change by adopting policies often publicly described as 'anti-colour insurance'. The elites of Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Iran and several Central Asian

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*Corresponding author. Email: efinkel@wisc.edu

authoritarian states sought to alleviate the threat of a colour revolution by focusing on several key political and intellectual strategies, namely attacks on independent civil society and political opposition, limits on electoral competition and efforts to ideologically delegitimize colour revolution ideas and techniques as subversive and alien to their country's culture and traditions. In this special issue we argue that understanding authoritarian strategies of democracy prevention is therefore no less important than understanding strategies of democracy promotion.

The goal of this special issue is to provide the conceptual framework through which these authoritarian strategies can be compared and analysed in depth by focusing on six major country cases in which these strategies were systematically applied. We construct this conceptual framework around one key question, namely, why, despite the different institutional designs, economic structures and resources available to their leaders, did the authoritarian states of Eurasia adopt a largely similar repertoire of democracy prevention strategies?

Based on the analysis of post-Soviet and Iranian anti-colour revolution policies, we argue that authoritarian regimes studied democracy promotion techniques, used in various colour revolutions, and focused their prevention strategies on combatting these techniques. Thus, the 'modular'[1] nature and the form of colour revolution determined the repertoire of democracy prevention policies adopted and eventually helped to stall the spread of this wave of regime change. While we do observe some variation in choices of strategies within this repertoire, we argue that the specific mix of policies and rhetoric, adopted by each authoritarian regime, depended on the perceived intensity of threat to regime survival and the regime's perceived strength vis-à-vis the democratic opposition.

This introductory article makes several theoretical and policy contributions. First, while previous studies[2] focused on the pro-democracy opposition learning and imitative capabilities as instrumental in driving regime change, this special issue emphasizes the important, but understudied, topic of authoritarian learning as a factor in democracy prevention. Second, we contribute to the literature on democratization and authoritarianism by expanding the analysis of democracy prevention policies to ideational, ideological and rhetorical realms. Autocrats, we show, not only *employ* repressive strategies to ensure their survival, they also try to *convince* their citizens that authoritarianism is a superior alternative to electoral democracy. This special issue also demonstrates that there is no linear relationship between regime violence and regime capabilities – both an extremely weak (Tajikistan) and a fairly strong (Belarus) autocratic government fended off a colour revolution challenge without using large-scale repression. Finally, this special issue contributes to democracy promotion literature by showing that in order to be successful, pro-democracy activists have to take into account authoritarian states' learning capabilities and be constantly innovative in their strategy choices.

In the following pages we will provide a review of the existing literature on colour revolution in Eurasia, and demonstrate how the theoretical frameworks, developed by previous studies of colour revolutions, inform our analysis of autocrats' anti-colour policies. Next, by focusing on the case studies presented in this

special issue, we will show the repertoire of authoritarian reactions to colour revolutions. This repertoire represents in essence the 'mirror image' of the repertoire of the colour revolution activists. Finally, we will highlight the reasons for the variation in democracy prevention policies across the region.

Colour revolutions: summary and review of a scholarly debate

Over the last years, colour revolutions have received a substantial amount of scholarly attention. Some optimistically and sometimes euphorically viewed these cases of regime change as genuine democratic breakthroughs that were going to have substantial, positive and permanent effects.[3] Other accounts were more cautious and sceptical[4] and some were overtly pessimistic about the real impact of colour revolutions on the quality of democracy in the affected countries.[5] In addition to evaluating the impact of these cases of attempted regime change, leading scholars, such as Mark Beissinger, Valerie Bunce, Sharon Wolchik, Henry Hale, David Lane, Michael McFaul, Joshua Tucker, Lucan Way, Stephen White, and numerous others, participated in lively debates on the causes and origins of colour revolutions.[6]

However, despite the significant scholarly interest in colour revolutions, the actions of broadly similar authoritarian governments that were not overthrown have not been fully explored. Methodologically, this makes many works on colour revolutions subject to the critique of case selection based upon a dependent variable because they do not address those cases in which, paraphrasing Arthur Conan Doyle, the colour revolution did not bark. Important steps in the right direction have been made by Bunce and Wolchik, Hess, and Kalandadze and Orenstein, who include in their analysis not only the cases of successful regime change, but also the cases of successful repression of pro-democracy, protest movements.[7] Authoritarian resistance to democracy has also been addressed in the *Democratization* special issue on democracy promotion before and after colour revolution,[8] and several chapters in a recent book, edited by Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss.[9] Yet a comprehensive and detailed analysis of Eurasian autocrats' reactions to colour revolutions (and democratization more generally) is still lacking.[10] The main motivation behind this special issue is to contribute to addressing this gap in the literature on democratization and authoritarian reactions to it.

Stoner-Weiss argues that there is a certain difficulty in studying countries in which a colour revolution or pro-democracy mass protests has failed to take off. The reason for this difficulty (and a possible explanation for this lack of scholarly attention) is that 'it is always harder to explain a nonevent, something that never happened, than to find factors that explain something that actually did take place'.[11] Yet while in many Eurasian states the colour revolution was, indeed, a 'non-event' incumbents' policies, designed to prevent the colour revolution, were not. 'The spread of the impetus for political change does not necessarily produce actual change, especially not the faithful imitation of the original

model', notes Weyland. 'Governments often do not passively fall to the spread of contention but design an active response' by cracking down on the challengers or partially giving in to their demands without giving up power.[12] Therefore, authoritarian governments' policies, we argue, require studying and analysing. Furthermore, scholars of colour revolutions and democratization more broadly have to recognize, as Silitsky noted, that 'democrats and revolutionaries are not the only ones who can learn from the past and apply new knowledge to fulfill their political goals. Indeed, their antagonists appear to have mastered the science and craft of democratic transitions in order to stop the contagion at their borders'.[13] The analysis of colour revolutions will be incomplete without sufficient attention to the topic of the prevention of such revolutions.

Why then are some authoritarian leaders more successful at fending off the threat of a colour revolution than others? A structure-centred perspective is put forward by Lucan Way, who argues that the survival of incumbent autocrats is certain when one of the following conditions exists – (1) highly institutionalized party rule backed by a non-material source of cohesion such as revolutionary tradition or highly salient ideology; (2) an extensive, well-funded, and cohesive coercive apparatus; or (3) state discretionary control over the economy.[14] However, by emphasizing structural factors, this explanation neglects (or deems irrelevant) the actual incumbents' anti-colour policies, which often did not focus on strengthening the ruling party, the coercive apparatus or the rulers' grip over the economy. In Russia and Belarus, as the contributions to this special issue show, the authorities devoted substantial efforts to ideological issues, such as presenting the anti-national and predatory nature of the pro-democracy organizations and ideology. In the case of Tajikistan, notes Markowitz, the very weakness and fragmentation of the ruling elite actually contributed to regime stability. Furthermore, parties with revolutionary traditions rarely exist in the post-communist region, and the only party that does enjoy a revolutionary legacy, the Communist Party, is generally excluded from the government.[15] Therefore, a much more detailed, fine-grained perspective is needed to explain not only *why* but also *how* authoritarian rulers coped with threats to their rule.

Contrary to Way's structuralist approach, Vitali Silitsky concentrates on autocrats' actions and policies, aimed at preventing a colour revolution in their domain. These policies, described by Silitsky as 'pre-emptive authoritarianism', take several forms: (1) tactical pre-emption, that is, attacks on the opposition, the civil society, and their infrastructures; (2) institutional pre-emption, which focuses on changing the fundamental rules of the political game to the incumbents' advantage; and (3) cultural pre-emption – the manipulation of public consciousness and collective memory to spread stereotypes and myths about the opposition, the West, and democracy in general.[16] While in general we demonstrate the validity of Silitsky's argument, our goal is to study a wider set of questions: to what extent were these 'pre-emptive authoritarianism' policies triggered by colour revolutions, rather than by a general desire to consolidate political power; what are the forms and content of pre-emption policies beyond Silitsky's case study of Belarus: and why did particular governments focus on specific pre-emption policies?

In addition to the scant literature that explicitly deals with states in which the colour revolution failed to achieve regime change or simply did not materialize, we also suggest using the existing literature on successful colour revolutions as a basic theoretical framework to understand anti-colour authoritarian policies. The scholarship on the causes and origins of colour revolutions can be divided into several groups.

Some authors present a long list of factors that led to the overturn of authoritarian regimes in Serbia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. Thus, McFaul lists seven factors – a semi-autocratic regime, an unpopular incumbent, a united opposition, an ability publicly to expose electoral fraud, independent media, the opposition's ability to mobilize people to take to the streets, and divisions among the regime's coercive forces – as important factors in explaining the success of the revolutions.[17] A largely similar, but even longer, nine-point list is presented by Kuzio, who argues that the success of the colour revolution is determined by the existence of such factors as: a competitive (that is, semi-) authoritarian state facilitating space for the democratic opposition; 'return to Europe' civic nationalism that assists in mobilizing civil society; a preceding political crisis that weakened the regime's legitimacy; a pro-democratic capital city; unpopular ruling elites; a charismatic candidate; a united opposition; mobilized youth; and regionalism and foreign intervention (Russia or the European Union).[18]

Other works can be classified as macro, meso, and micro perspectives on the colour revolutions. The macro-level approach focuses on the structural factors that affect the success or the lack of a colour revolution. The most visible example of the macro perspective is an article by Lucan Way published in the *Journal of Democracy*, which argues that structural factors, namely the strength of a country's ties to the West, and the strength (or more precisely, the weakness) of the incumbent party and state are the 'real causes' of the colour revolutions.[19] Meso-perspectives emphasize the importance of sub-national level actors, such as dissatisfied business people who were willing and able to provide financial, logistical and media support to the opposition[20] or youth movements that spearheaded the generational protests of the post-communist generation against the older cohort of power holders.[21] The successful defeat of authoritarian rulers also depends heavily on the extent to which the opposition and their allies were able to use novel and sophisticated electoral strategies, as argued by Bunce and Wolchik.[22] A micro-level (and the most overlooked) perspective in the field of colour revolutions focuses on decisions of individuals, psychological factors and motivations for participation in mass protests that led to colour revolutions. Thus, it is the realization that an electoral fraud has been committed by the authorities that makes citizens take to the streets and participate in anti-government protests.[23]

The special issue contribution to the colour revolutions debate

In this special issue we propose a typology of authoritarian governments' reactions to colour revolutions. This typology is based both on Silitsky's framework of

tactical, institutional and cultural pre-emption, as well as key arguments of the scholarship on colour revolutions. Faced with the threat of regime change, authoritarian incumbents can and do rely on at least one of five major strategies – *isolation, marginalization, distribution, repression, persuasion*.[24] The authoritarian government can attempt to isolate itself from unwanted external influences by refusing to register foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs), by withholding visas from election observers, or by shutting down and censoring media outlets. It can marginalize or almost completely eliminate the opposition by tinkering with electoral legislation, limiting opposition leaders' access to mass media, and by presenting the opposition in a highly negative light, such as being greedy, corrupt and unpatriotic pawns of foreign powers. It can reward loyalists or buy off important or potentially threatening groups. It can also punish by withholding benefits, rents or income from subversive elites and businesspeople, force challengers into exile, or have them imprisoned or disappear. Finally, the government can try to convince the population that the opposition's democratic ideals are alien to the country's history, tradition and identity, funded by foreign security services, or driven by US and Western geopolitical and economic interests.

We show that each of these strategies can be applied at the macro, micro and meso levels. Thus, isolation can be pursued by severing the country's ties with the West (macro level), by limiting the ability of foreign NGOs to operate in the country (meso level) or by denying visas to individual journalists or election observers (micro level). Similarly, repression can be directed against society as a whole, specific groups, such as opposition parties, individual democracy activists, or people who dare to take to the streets to protest electoral fraud.

In this special issue we identify the actual construct of these anti-colour policies by focusing on five post-Soviet authoritarian states – Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These countries were chosen because they represent different geographic regions (Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia), and vary in terms of size, natural resources, regime type, levels of social development, involvement in internal and external violent conflicts, and regime strength and stability more generally. Furthermore, each of these states borders at least one country that witnessed a successful colour revolution, thus exacerbating the authorities' sense of threat. In addition, we focus on Iran, which is located outside the region in which the colour revolutions took place and does not share a border with any of the 'revolutionary' states, yet nonetheless provides an illuminating case for a comparison drawn from outside the post-communist orbit. By presenting a series of qualitative, country-focused studies we aim to explore the whole spectrum of potential anti-democratization policies, ranging from preventing elite splits at the top (the case of Azerbaijan), to establishing supervision bodies at the community level (Uzbekistan); from brutally and violently cracking down on protesters (Iran), to using very limited physical force (Belarus); from staging mass rallies (Russia), to fearing any type of mass mobilization (Tajikistan). Our main findings, however, are that the strategies adopted by the governments of these diverse states follow a similar logic of isolation, marginalization, distribution, repression and

persuasion and that the specific policies are shaped by regimes' perceived intensity of a threat to regime survival and the regime's perceived strength vis-à-vis the democratic opposition.

Another major finding of our collaborative effort is that colour revolutions, although limited to a handful of states, had a significant political impact on authoritarian and semi-authoritarian countries across Europe and Asia. Based on numerous interviews with local elites, scholars, opposition activists, as well as an analysis of official publications and statements and on-site observations, the contributors to this special issue demonstrate that colour revolutions created an acute feeling of threat among authoritarian elites, which led them to adopt policies designed to prevent the possibility of a colour revolution in their respective countries. Furthermore, the case studies show that rather than igniting a fourth wave of democratization, as numerous activists, scholars and politicians had hoped, the fear of colour revolutions made (at least temporarily) the existing authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes even more politically closed, repressive, and arguably less prone to democratize and reform than they had been before the colour revolutions took place. The articles in this special issue show that restrictions on NGOs, an almost complete elimination of independent electoral monitoring, and an anti-liberal state ideology in Russia; a barrage of vehemently anti-Western propaganda and threats of long imprisonment to participants of anti-government protests in Belarus; and the retrenchment of democratic reforms in Tajikistan were driven by the fear of further colour revolutions in the region. Furthermore, while the danger of new colour revolutions in Eurasia seems to have passed, the institutions and policies designed to assist authoritarian rulers in thwarting the danger of potential regime overthrow are by and large still firmly in place.

Continuing the old debate between structure and agency, this special issue provides a wide range of perspectives on authoritarian reactions and policies. The focus on power holders' persuasion and ideology construction efforts (Belarus, Russia) or palace politics (Azerbaijan) is supplemented with structural explanations (Tajikistan) or attempts to find a middle ground between the two. Obviously it is beyond the scope of this special issue to resolve the structure versus agency debate, but based on our findings we do suggest that in the study of authoritarian reactions to the threat of democratization, the focus on agency, especially that of the top leaders, is well founded. After all, even structural factors, viewed by Way as crucial to autocrats' survival – highly institutionalized party rule, an extensive and cohesive coercive apparatus, and the state's control over the economy – are outcomes of political actors' actions and decisions.

We also find that although coercion and repression do play a role in authoritarian resistance attempts, no government relies on naked coercion alone. States differ in their attempts to create and promote the ideological foundations of the existing regime. At the same time, all states under review adopt policies aimed at ideologically legitimizing the government, either as promoting a unique version of democracy (Russia), or as being economically effective (Belarus), or simply as an antidote to widespread disorder (Tajikistan).

The economy is another important sphere of governments' preventive activities and we argue for a more detailed examination of economic issues, the extent of corruption and the density of clientelistic networks – topics which are often overlooked in the literature on colour revolutions. Economic growth by itself, as the Ukrainian case has clearly demonstrated, is insufficient to prevent a colour revolution. Targeted distribution of social and monetary benefits, on the other hand, proves to be a much more effective strategy of authoritarian governmental survival. Social security benefits for senior citizens in Belarus, pensions to families of martyrs and veterans in Iran, and internships in Gazprom for *Nashi* members in Russia fulfill the same function of creating a substantially large group of citizens dependent on the regime for their livelihood and wellbeing, and therefore willing to take actions in support of the government when the government is challenged by the pro-democratic opposition.

Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Iran: summary of the main findings

The picture of authoritarian reaction to colour revolutions that emerges from the contributions that comprise this special issue is of a complex and multifaceted set of policies which are unique for each country but drawn from the same repertoire of potential actions. Each regime adopts a particular blend of democracy prevention policies, concentrating on the issues that are perceived as the most threatening for the ruling elites. Table 1 summarizes different aspects of each country's anti-colour revolution strategies and their intensity.

Russia, note Finkel and Brudny, did not experience revolutionary attempts despite sharing a border with two 'coloured' states – Ukraine and Georgia.[25] This lack of a colour upheaval is even more puzzling given the fact that in the early and mid-2000s the country still enjoyed at least some media freedom, political pluralism, and independent civil society groups and youth organizations, determined to replicate various colour revolution techniques – factors that the literature on colour revolutions regards as important for their occurrence. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine created an acute sense of threat among the Russian elites and the Russia contribution discusses efforts that have been undertaken by the Kremlin to prevent a coloured upheaval in the country. Russian anti-colour revolution policies

Table 1. The focus of authoritarian reactions to colour revolutions.

	Isolation	Marginalization	Distribution	Repression	Persuasion
Russia	Low	Medium	Low	Low	High
Belarus	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Iran	High	Low	Medium	High	Medium
Tajikistan	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Uzbekistan	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Azerbaijan	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Low

took various forms, such as the creation of state-sponsored institutions claiming to represent civil society, electoral legislation reforms and a weakening and marginalization of the opposition parties. The main focus, however, was on studying key democracy promotion techniques, and faithfully replicating them *against* a potential colour revolution. The pro-Putin youth movement *Nashi* and attempts to create an official state ideology are the most prominent examples of these authoritarian learning, imitation and replication techniques, generally understudied both by the scholars of authoritarianism and of democratization.

Unlike Russia, Belarus did experience a colour revolution attempt. Yet, despite a faithful replication of strategies that proved to be so successful in neighbouring Ukraine,[26] colour revolution failed to materialize in Belarus. Furthermore, Lukashenka's regime, arguably 'the last dictatorship in Europe'[27] needed no use of excessive violence to fend off the challenge. The explanation, argues Korosteleva, lies in the simple and often overlooked fact that non-democratic regimes can and often do enjoy genuine popular support and legitimacy.[28] The case of Belarus, argues the article, teaches us that colour revolution tactics can be applied in virtually any state; their success, however, often depends on factors that are beyond the control of Western democracy promoters and local pro-democratic opposition activists. Capitalizing on the Soviet past, Lukashenka, as the Belarus case study shows, succeeded in persuading the local population of the efficiency and supremacy of his non-democratic regime.

Substantial persuasive efforts, argues Tezcür, were also undertaken by the Iranian government.[29] Alarmed by the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and threatened by George W. Bush's democracy promotion discourse, Teheran's authorities, the article argues, clearly viewed the colour revolutions as a blueprint to follow in attempts to overthrow the Islamic regime. While hostility to the American philanthropist and financial backer of many pro-democracy NGOs, George Soros, was widespread throughout authoritarian states of Eurasia, nowhere was it more pronounced than in Iran, where Soros was dubbed the 'American-Zionist capitalist', plotting to overthrow the regime.[30] The case of Iran also clearly shows that authoritarian rulers' persuasion and framing strategies do not automatically ensure success. The Green (yet another colour) Movement in Iran was able to stage violent pro-democratic mass protests against the large-scale falsification of the 2009 presidential election results. The Iranian case can also provide a useful comparative case, outside the post-Soviet region, for further analysis and evaluation of various Orange, Rose or Tulip movements. In particular, it allows us to test arguments that the colour revolutions were essentially the revolt of the post-Soviet generation, or that the success of the colour revolutions was affected by the post-1991 privatization reforms.[31]

In some cases, however, deliberate persuasion efforts were hardly needed. As Markowitz points out, in Tajikistan any attempt at mass mobilization is viewed with suspicion, as it reminds citizens of the mass mobilization that led to a bloody and devastating civil war in the early and mid-1990s.[32] Another legacy of the civil war that determined the nature of Tajikistan's government's reaction

to the colour revolution was the strength (or more precisely, the lack thereof) of the state and its institutions. Weakened by internal divisions, the state could pursue only mild or moderate anti-democratization policies. Viewed in a broader comparative perspective, the case of Tajikistan suggests an interesting link between state strength and authoritarian backlash and survival policies. Compared to the mild and moderate reaction of other states discussed in this special issue, such as Kazakhstan and Belarus, it might be argued that strong *and* weak autocrats are more likely to pursue moderate backlash policies, whereas countries with medium state capacity (such as Russia) are more likely to forcefully react to any democratization threat. Hopefully, further research will determine the link between state strength and anti-democratization policies.

State strength and weakness, while intuitively compelling concepts, are not easily defined. Moreover, in authoritarian states, which often do not possess or are not willing to share essential information about their economy, bureaucratic apparatus, or government capacity, the situation is even more complicated. Jennifer Murtazashvili's article on Uzbekistan – one of the most closed and authoritarian states in the world – tries to unpack the puzzle of state strength by focusing on the state's economic performance, capacity for repression and the co-optation of local institutions.[33] Uzbekistan, notes Murtazashvili, contains all the ingredients observers had long argued would lead to not only to regime change but civil war: suppression of the market economy and political and religious repression. Yet, the autocratic regime in Uzbekistan has remained remarkably stable in the face of revolutions in neighbouring countries. The secret of Uzbekistan's authoritarian stability, argues the article, is not simply in the government's ability and willingness to repress its opponents, but to combine this repression with wide distribution of material benefits and co-optation of local and traditional institutions. The analysis of Uzbekistan also suggests a need to move beyond the urban bias that characterizes current research on colour revolutions. Colour revolutions were undoubtedly an urban phenomenon and capital cities were the main arenas of clashes between the government and the opposition. At the same time, rural and small town populations also play a role in determining the success or failure of colour revolutions, and these groups should also be included in the analysis.

Co-opting local and traditional institutions, however, might be a successful strategy for colour revolution prevention, but this is not the only way to achieve this goal. In Azerbaijan, notes Radnitz, the main focus of Aliev family survival and consolidation activities was on preventing splits among the ruling elites.[34] Authoritarian regimes, he argues, can survive long after they lose popular support and, therefore, the immediate threat to the power holders was not from 'people in rural areas who lacked clean water and suffered from high unemployment', but from members of the elite who 'drive around Baku in shiny Mercedes Benzes and invest in multi-million-dollar condominiums overlooking the Caspian Sea'. The former, from the Aliev's point of view, are much less threatening than the latter. A divided elite has been widely recognized as a necessary component of successful colour revolutions,[35] and David Lane goes even further, viewing

these events as 'revolutionary coup d'états',[36] thus highlighting the impact of elite conflict. What has not been studied, however, is how authoritarian governments, threatened by colour revolutions, prevent splits and impose unity among the elites. Radnitz's article provides important insights from Azerbaijani 'palace politics' and hopefully this line of research will be pursued by further studies.

In sum, in this special issue we aim to contribute to the literature on colour revolutions, democratization and authoritarianism, by expanding the analysis of colour revolutions to cases that did not experience regime change and by demonstrating which factors contributed to authoritarian regime survival in Eurasia. We propose a new typology of autocrats' reactions to the threat of democratization and look at how different non-democratic states coped with the challenge of democratization. We also highlight the desirability of expanding analysis of authoritarian rulers' survival strategies beyond the institutional, legislative and economic realms and to invest more effort in studying authoritarian regimes' persuasion strategies and attempts to create new ideological foundations of their rule. Finally, this special issue attempts to demonstrate the importance of authoritarian learning and the capacity of autocratic regimes to study democracy promotion techniques and to focus their democracy prevention efforts precisely on the policies and topics on which democracy promoters concentrate, sometimes replicating democracy promotion techniques *against* the pro-democratic opposition.

Against the background of the current wave (late 2011) of mass mobilization in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and other Arab states, understanding the mechanisms of authoritarian rulers' reactions to democratization challenges is an imperative for scholars of democracy and authoritarianism. We hope that the articles presented in this special issue will not only enrich our understanding of colour revolutions and authoritarian reactions to them, but will also pave the way to further research that will cover not only post-Soviet Eurasia, but also other regions.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Beissinger, 'Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena'.
2. Ibid.; Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.
3. See, for example, Åslund, *How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy*; Karatnycky, 'Ukraine's Orange Revolution'.
4. Hale, 'Democracy or Autocracy on the March? The Colored Revolutions as Normal Dynamics of Patronal Presidentialism'.

5. Kalandadze and Orenstein, 'Electoral Protests and Democratization'.
6. Beissinger, 'Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena'; Beissinger, 'An Interrelated Wave'; Bunce and Wolchik, 'Defeating Dictators'; Bunce and Wolchik, 'Democratising Elections in the Postcommunist World'; Bunce and Wolchik, 'Favorable Conditions and Electoral Revolutions'; Bunce and Wolchik, 'Getting Real About "Real Causes"'; Hale, 'Democracy or Autocracy on the March?'; Lane, '"Coloured Revolution" as a Political Phenomenon'; McFaul, 'Transitions from Postcommunism'; Tucker, 'Enough!'; Way, 'The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions'; White, 'Is There a Pattern?'.
7. Bunce and Wolchik, 'Defeating Dictators'; Hess, 'Protests, Parties, and Presidential Succession Competing Theories of Color Revolutions in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan'; Kalandadze and Orenstein, 'Electoral Protests and Democratization: Beyond the Color Revolutions'.
8. *Democratization* 16 (2009).
9. Bunce, McFaul, and Stoner-Weiss, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World*.
10. But see Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash*; Wilson, 'Coloured Revolutions: The View from Moscow and Beijing'.
11. Stoner-Weiss, 'Comparing Oranges and Apples: The Internal and External Dimensions of Russia's Turn Away from Democracy', 255.
12. Weyland, 'The Diffusion of Regime Contention in European Democratization, 1830–1940', 1156–7.
13. Silitsky, 'Contagion Deterred: Preemptive Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union (the Case of Belarus)', 275.
14. Way, 'Resistance to Contagion: Sources of Authoritarian Stability in the Former Soviet Union', 230.
15. A notable exception to this rule is Moldova.
16. Silitsky, 'Contagion Deterred: Preemptive Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union (the Case of Belarus)', 276.
17. McFaul, 'Transitions from Postcommunism'.
18. Kuzio, 'Democratic Breakthroughs and Revolutions in Five Postcommunist Countries'.
19. Way, 'The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions'.
20. Radnitz, 'The Color of Money: Privatization, Economic Dispersion, and the Post-Soviet 'Revolutions'.
21. Nikolayenko, 'The Revolt of the Post-Soviet Generation: Youth Movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine'.
22. Bunce and Wolchik, 'Defeating Dictators'.
23. Tucker, 'Enough!'
24. For an additional, and in some aspects similar typology, see Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union*.
25. Finkel and Brudny, 'Russia and the Colour Revolutions'.
26. Silitsky, 'Contagion Deterred: Preemptive Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union (the Case of Belarus)'.
27. Marples, 'Europe's Last Dictatorship'.
28. Korosteleva, 'Questioning Democracy Promotion'.
29. Tezcür, 'Democracy Promotion, Authoritarian Resiliency, and Political Unrest in Iran'.
30. 'Take This Conspiracy Seriously!' The editorial describes Soros as 'the Zionist American capitalist who has strong ties with the Zionist lobby, and some even call him the "unofficial American agent" in the Third World countries. He is the sponsor and executor of "velvet revolution" or coloured revolution projects'.

31. Nikolayenko, 'The Revolt of the Post-Soviet Generation'; Radnitz, 'The Color of Money'.
32. Markowitz, 'Tajikistan: Authoritarian Reaction in a Postwar State'.
33. Murtazashvili, 'Coloured by Revolution'.
34. Radnitz, 'Oil in the Family: Managing Succession in Azerbaijan'.
35. See, for instance, McFaul, 'Transitions from Postcommunism'.
36. Lane, '"Coloured Revolution" as a Political Phenomenon'.

Notes on contributors

Evgeny Finkel is PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a Research Fellow, Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence, Yale University, USA. His articles have been published and are forthcoming in *Comparative Politics*, *East European Politics and Societies* (with Y. Brudny), *Global Society* and several other journals.

Yitzhak M. Brudny is the Jay and Leonie Darwin Chair in Russian Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. He is the author of *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991* (Harvard University Press, 1998), and the principal editor of *Restructuring Post-Communist Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). His articles on Russia and the former Soviet Union have appeared in numerous journals and edited volumes.

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